

## THE WAR.

Successful Crossing of the Czar's Troops at Three Points.

## THE RUSSIANS IN BULGARIA.

Story of the Passage at Sistova.

## BOMBARDMENTS ALONG THE LINE.

Two Hundred and Eighty Miles of Fire.

## PROCLAMATION TO BULGARIA.

Renewal of the Struggle in Asia Minor.

[BY CABLE TO THE HERALD.]

LONDON, June 29, 1877.

In the words of the Grand Duke Nicholas' official report "the difficult and complicated task of crossing the Danube is achieved." The Russians have already established a foothold in Bulgaria, from which it will be impossible to dislodge them. Along the entire line of 280 miles the most desperately aggressive operations were simultaneously begun. For three days the placid waters of the Danube have flowed through the infernal regions. The HERALD correspondents in the field have forwarded their reports to the chief office in Bucharest, whence it is forwarded at once to this point. The detailed narrative of the crossing at Sistova is another brilliant achievement for the HERALD's correspondents at the front.

## THE DAY BEFORE THE CROSSING.

Daylight broke on Tuesday serene and apparently unpromising of great events; but it soon transpired that it was the day on which the active preparations for the passage of the river were to be concluded. From the Russian batteries on the Roumanian bank, along the entire line, cannonading began in earnest. The bombardment of Rustchuk had been dreadful up to this time and had tended to cause a general movement of Turkish troops toward that locality.

## NIGHT ON THE RIVER'S BANK.

In every Russian camp along the great river the men were inspected during the day. The arms were examined and the cartridges were seen to be full count. The troops quartered in towns passed the night more agreeably than those who slept in the open field, because the latter were compelled literally to sleep with their guns in their hands.

## THE GRAND ADVANCE.

On Wednesday the first move in the descent into Bulgaria was made at Kalarash. The bombardment of Widdin, Nicopolis, Sistova, Rustchuk, Turtukal and Silistria continued in a more furious manner. The scenes of destruction reported from Rustchuk repeated themselves in every Turkish town assailed.

## BEATING BACK THE TURKS AT NICOPOLIS.

The crossing at Nicopolis from Turnu-Margureli was witnessed by the Czar, who sat on horseback on the summit of Mount Grapavi. The Turks made a desperate resistance with every available man whom they could muster. Opposing the landing were ten Turkish battalions and eighteen field cannon. Savage fighting took place on the banks and in a little time the corpses were thickly strewn there. Still the Russians came on; for every man killed, ten were ready to take his place.

## THE TURKS OPEN FIRE.

Their movement was observed from the Bulgarian side, and a heavy fire was opened on the boats from the Turkish artillery. The boats pushed gallantly on, however, and as they neared the other shore the Turkish infantry commenced a vigorous fusillade. Detachment after detachment followed from the Russian side in boats, and as they ran in toward the enemy's position they returned the musketry fire with good effect. The Russian batteries meanwhile kept up a terrific cannonade to cover the landing.

## A LANDING EFFECTED.

As the first boats dashed into the bank the men leaped ashore with a ringing cheer and immediately formed a strong skirmish line to protect the landing. Boat after boat pushed in and company after company disembarked, and soon a sufficient force was assembled to justify an attack on the nearest Turkish position. The Turkish infantry were vigorously charged and after a brief but desperate struggle were driven from the landing place at the point of the bayonet.

## TWO POINTS MADE.

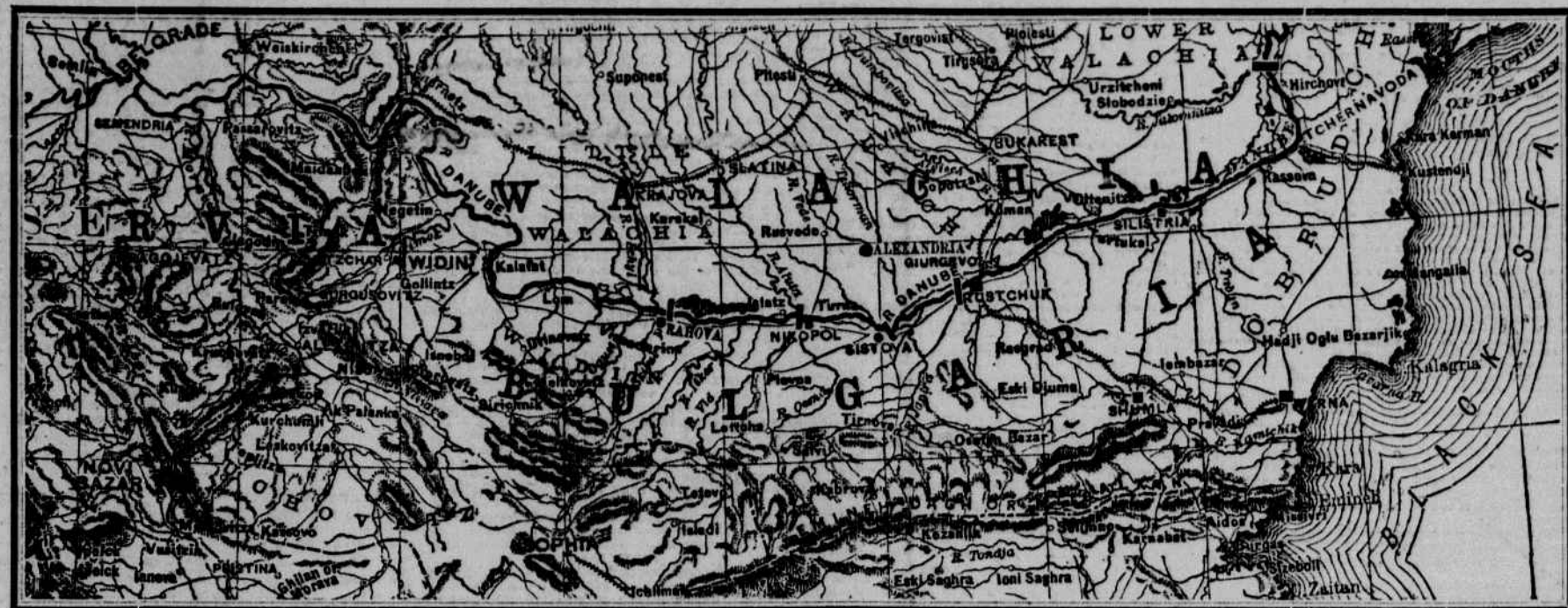
Attempts at crossing made by the Russians at Rustchuk and Turtukal were unsuccessful. These movements were evidently feints to occupy the attention of the Rustchuk, Turtukal and Silistria garrisons.

## THE CROSSING AT SISTOVA.

The HERALD correspondent with the Russian Eighth corps, which crossed at Sistova, reports, under date of Wednesday, from the Bulgarian side, after the successful execution of the movement, that the preparations for the crossing at that point began in the swampy meadows below Simniza, where the troops were assembled on Tuesday evening at dusk.

## THE RUSSIANS CROSS THE DANUBE.

Map of the Valley of the Danube, Showing the Places Where the Russians Have Crossed Into Bulgaria.



The fortress of Widdin, or Widin, is situated on the right bank of the Danube, and near the curve where the river begins its easterly course between Roumania and Bulgaria. The shape of the town is that of a semi-circle, the river front forming the diameter. The citadel, or what was regarded as such, is on the western side of the town, but does not fulfil the requirements of such a place of strength in modern warfare. The land defences are now an old encircling of irregular trace and several outworks of comparatively recent construction. These in combination represent an irregular pentagon flanked by bastions. On the river front the works are more pretensions, with bastioned fronts and a revetment of forty feet in height, protected by a deep, wide ditch and a covered way and glacis. The ditch can be filled from the river when necessary. Between the town and Kalarash, on the opposite side of the Danube, there is an island which the Russians seized in 1855, when attacking Widdin. Kalarash has until now been the regular depot of Widdin and covered the communication between that town and Western Roumania. Since the army of Prince Charles has joined the Russian forces Kalarash has been occupied in force and fortified by the

Roumanians, and artillery duels occur at intervals between them and the Turks in Widdin. It will be remembered that quite recently a Turkish gunboat, built at Ploesti, was captured when attempting to pass the Roumanian batteries at Kalarash. As Widdin is one of the most important Turkish fortresses on the Danube the desperate condition of the Turkish cause is proved by its virtual abandonment to bombardment and siege by the Roumanian army. Should Widdin fall the Turks must leave the Serbian frontier and abandon their hold on Bosnia and Herzegovina, for their chief base of operations would be lost. The capture of Widdin by the invading army would immensely facilitate operations in Western Bulgaria.

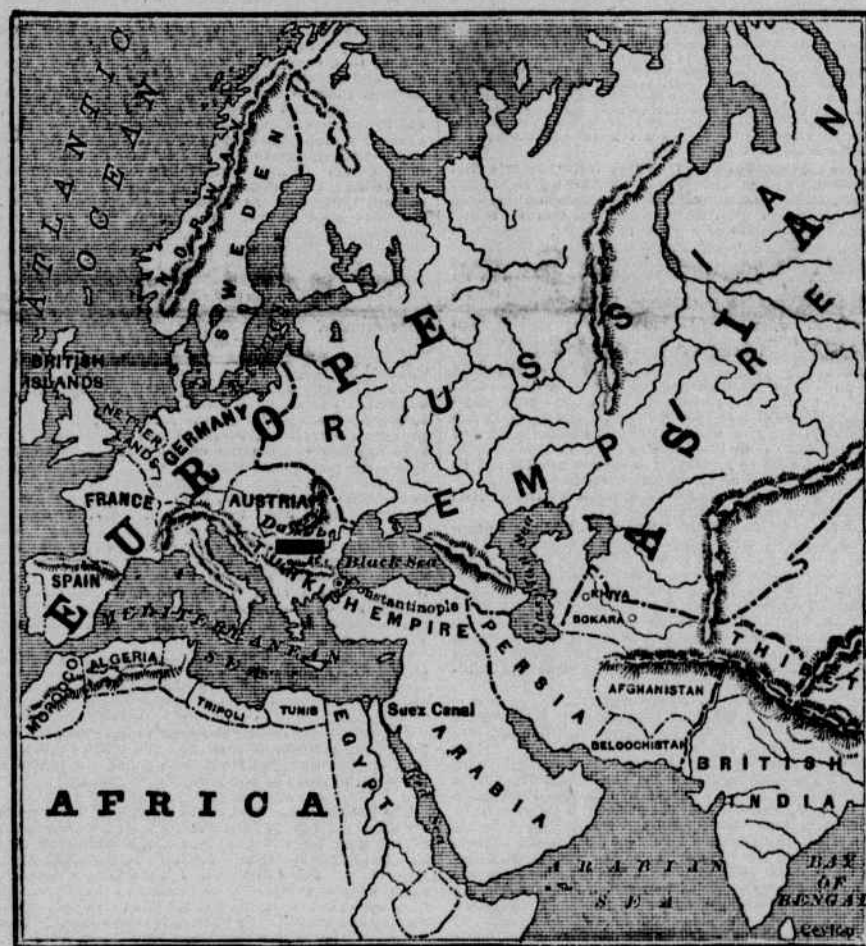
Below Widdin are the minor fortresses of Lom and Rahova, the first thirty and the second sixty-eight miles from Widdin, but neither of a character to present any difficulties to an army crossing in their immediate vicinity. Rahova has two detached forts armed with light pieces, but the construction of the works is defective. Certainly they cannot resist rifled artillery. Between Rahova and Nicopolis, or Nikopol, there are no defensive works. Nikopol, forty-eight miles from Rahova, is now in the hands

of the Russians, and is an important capture. The town is built on a height immediately over the river bank, to which it has been connected by an enclosure with earthen parapets, revetted, and a ditch flanked with bastions. From its position Nikopol can be made a strong *tiie de pont*, covering one of the lines of retreat, which the Russians will naturally secure at all important points along the Danube.

Below Nikopol and distant from it twenty-four miles, is the town and fortress of Sistova, also occupied by the Russians after their crossing from Simniza on the 27th. Sistova is built on two hills close to the river, which are crowned by substantial works. The town is defended by an encircling of earthwork, flanked by bastions and covered by a ditch. The Jantra unites with the Danube below Sistova and forms a good line covering Rustchuk, but the Russians have crossed in force between the Jantra and the last named fortress, thus making the river a defence for their detached force constructed on the crests of the hills immediately in rear of the town. The heights still further in the rear of Silistria command it, and it is probable that if the Russians succeed in seizing them Silistria will speedily fall.

The Roumanian town opposite Rustchuk, is now completely surrounded by Russian batteries. Those fronting on the Danube are now bombarding Rustchuk. Turtukal is thirty-five miles down the river from Rustchuk, and is opposite, or nearly so, to Oltenitz, which is occupied by the Russians. The attempt to cross here has failed for the present, and indeed it looks as if it was only intended as a feint to keep the Turks between Rustchuk and Silistria engaged while the real crossings were in progress elsewhere. Turtukal is not a regular fortress, but is defended by field works recently erected along the river. From Turtukal to Silistria it is thirty miles. The last named fortress is at the northeastern angle of the quadrilateral, and since the occupation of the Dobrudsha by the Russians represents the right of the Turkish line for the defence of the Danube. It is, as recently described in the HERALD, an important place of strength, defended by a bastioned escarpment and by detached forts constructed on the crests of the hills immediately in rear of the town. The heights still further in the rear of Silistria command it, and it is probable that if the Russians succeed in seizing them Silistria will speedily fall.

## THE WAR IN THE EAST.



■ The Russian Advance Across the Danube.

division was over, and another division ready to start at a moment's notice on the Roumanian shore.

## SEIZING THE HEIGHTS NEAR SISTOVA.

At nine o'clock in the morning a body of Turkish infantry, 3,000 strong, was pushed forward and commenced an attack on the troops that had been landed.

A sharp fight ensued, but the Turks were in a short time driven back by the fire of the Yohelchne brigade. This brigade, following up its first victory, soon after took possession of the heights near Sistova and established themselves firmly there, so as to protect the landing of the troops which followed them.

## SISTOVA OCCUPIED AND THE DANUBE BRIDGED.

So successful has the movement across the river been at this point that the Turkish resistance has been completely overcome and the Russians occupied Sistova on Thursday. As soon as that operation was completed a bridge was thrown across the Danube and the whole Eighth corps moved over to the Bulgarian side.

## A GALLANT YOUNG PRINCE.

Many officers and soldiers greatly distinguished themselves during the execution of this brilliant movement, but the youngest son of the Grand Duke Nicholas did so in a particularly brilliant manner.

## THE GRAND DUKE ON THE GROUND.

The Grand Duke Nicholas himself, with General Nepokortschitzky, chief of staff of the army of the Danube, and the whole staff of the Grand Duke, arrived over later on. The Grand Duke expressed himself highly gratified at the conduct of the troops throughout the day, and indeed he could not be otherwise than pleased. The Russians fought splendidly, and no one

who had an opportunity of witnessing their magnificent work that day when face to face with the Turks could for a moment doubt their superiority. Their loss was comparatively light.

Ten thousand Russians occupied the Island of Boreca, opposite Kalarash, and probably landed near Silistria. Thus the movement embraced the entire Turkish defence line of the Danube.

## CROSSING AT WIDDIN.

It is also believed that the crossing was successfully effected at Widdin. The Roumanians had established on the neighboring islands in the river forts from which the landing was covered.

## TO THE LAST CARTRIDGE.

At nearly all points appalling slaughter occurred. The Turks exhibited the most desperate valor and in many instances expended their last cartridges before retiring. They were evidently surprised by the suddenness of the Russian attack and were nowhere fully prepared to meet it.

## TWO CITIES IN FLAMES.

Owing to the terrible severity of the bombardments of Nicopolis and Widdin, both towns are in flames, and the Turkish stores in the latter are in imminent danger of destruction. The destruction of Widdin by fire will bring matters to a crisis in the garrison, even if it is able to hold out against the Russian and Roumanian invaders.

## THE KEY OF THE DANUBE.

The Russian position at Sistova is of eminent strategical value because it gives its possessors the command of the whole northeastern Danube portion of Bulgaria, rendering easy the circumventing of the chain of Turkish fortresses

which reach to the Balkans. In other words, the famous quadrilateral, about which so much has been said, can be converted into four isolated fortresses. Of course, the Russians do not expect to get past such a strong fortress as Shumla without a desperate fight.

## NEVER READY AT THE DECISIVE MOMENT.

Many theories are advanced to account for the carelessness of the Turks. The simple truth is that they did not expect their enemies. It is certain, in any event, that their inattention to the duties which they were posted upon the Danube to perform has greatly contributed to the general success of Wednesday.

## THE PART WHICH SUMMER PLAYED.

Above Turnu-Margureli, at the mouth of the Aluta River, and at Katovac Island, opposite Islas, the Russians were permitted to make a quiet embarkation. They found easy concealment among the trees and underbrush. On the island of Varnim, below Simniza and opposite Sistova, likewise, there was a dense growth of underwood, and behind this cover the Eighth corps embarked on barges. The pontoons were joined together with rafters, and clearing the eastern point of the island the long floating bridge was soon swung into the stream and floated to the other side of the river, the landing being effected on the edge of a wide-spreading plain. The Turks had only three battalions and a few badly served cannon to oppose the disembarkation, and made only a slight and ineffectual resistance. The garrison of Sistova had evidently trusted to the five kilometers (three and three-quarter miles) of water, formed by the many islands, for protection. This account of the crossing at Sistova is obtained from official sources at Bucharest, and will be seen to differ slightly as to minor details from the description of a HERALD correspondent, an eye witness to the passage, given below.

## OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION.

The following telegram was received in St. Petersburg yesterday morning from the Grand Duke Nicholas:—"The difficult and complicated task of crossing the Danube is achieved. Sistova and the surrounding heights are in our hands. General Dragomiroff's division, with mountain artillery, was the first to cross, the Volhynian regiment leading the van. There are now (the evening of the 27th) on the other side the Eighth army corps and the Fourth rifle brigade. The Thirty-fifth division is now crossing."

## ALL THE TROOPS OF GENERAL ZIMMERMAN HAVE CROSSED THE DANUBE AT GALATZ.

The Fourth army corps, from the interior of Russia, is now entering Roumania via Bolgrad.

## PROCLAMATION BY THE CZAR TO THE BULGARIANS.

The Czar issued the following proclamation to the Bulgarians:—

My troops have crossed the Danube. To-day they enter your territory, where they have already seven times fought for the amelioration of the lot of the Christian inhabitants of Turkey. Russia still bears the same love and solicitude toward all Christians in Turkey as when she secured the liberation of Serbia and Roumania. I have condescended to my army the mission of securing the sacred rights of

your nationality, which you have acquired by centuries of suffering and the blood of martyrs which has soaked your soil. Russia's mission is to build up, not to destroy. She is called by the decrees of Providence to conciliate and pacify all races and denominations in those parts of Bulgaria inhabited by a mixed population. Henceforth the Russian arms will protect every Christian against all violence. Not vengeance but strict equity will guide our acts."

The proclamation promises also equal protection to Mussulmans but impartial justice upon known participants in atrocities. It urges the abandonment of intestine dissensions and announces that as fast as the Russians advance Turkish rule will be replaced by regular organizations in which the native inhabitants will be summoned to take part under the supreme direction of special authorities and Bulgarian legions will be formed to serve as the nucleus of a local armed force destined to maintain order and security. The proclamation concludes:—"Follow faithfully the instructions of the Russian authorities. Therein lie your strength and security. With humility I pray the Lord to grant us victory over the enemies of Christianity and to send down His blessing upon our just cause."

## ANOTHER MONTENEGRO VICTORY.

The HERALD correspondent at Knin telegraphs that Mehmet Ali attacked the Montenegrin position in the district of Maratschin on Thursday, and a desperate engagement ensued. Both sides fought with great bravery, but finally the Turks were repulsed with great loss.

## THE DOBRUDSHA PRACTICALLY WON.

The special correspondent of the HERALD at Bucharest confirms the report already cabled of the evacuation of Tchernavoda and Medjidi by the Turks. The Russians are now within twelve miles of Tchernavoda and all resistance to their advance in the Dobrudsha may be said to be practically at an end.

## A RUSSIAN REPULSE NEAR ZEWIN.

The HERALD correspondent with the Turks at Erzeroum telegraphs that on Monday 10,000 Turks, commanded by Fegil Pacha, had an engagement near Zewin with 16,000 Russians. The Turks occupied a strongly entrenched position, which the Russians assaulted. They were driven back repeatedly, but several times renewed the assault, and fought with great bravery. Though superior in numbers the strength of the Turks' position more than counterbalanced this advantage, and they were eventually repulsed. The Russian loss was very heavy.

## BAJAZID RECAPTURED.

The same correspondent reports that the Turks have recaptured Bajazid after a sharp struggle, and the Russian left wing is now surrounded by Mukhtar Pacha's forces. The Russian loss in this battle is stated by the Turks to be 3,000, but the number is probably much exaggerated.

## WHERE MUKHTAR IS.

A despatch from Erzeroum, dated June 28, says:—"Mukhtar Pacha is at Yenikoi. He is expected to rejoin the centre at Zewin to-morrow."

## A DANGEROUS ATTACK ON THE REAR.

A Russian column, 15,000 strong, arrived before Khorassan in the rear of the Turkish centre on the 26th. Captain Mehemed, with a brigade, has occupied Kuprikor, to the west of Khorassan. Nine hundred and eight wagons, with ammunition have been sent to Mukhtar Pacha's camp.

## HOT WORK IN STORE FOR HOWART.

It is reported here in trustworthy circles that Russia has given Mr. Whitehead, the torpedo inventor, an order for 100 fish torpedoes, to be despatched to the Black Sea and the Danube. The Russian government is resolved, if possible, to destroy or drive away all the Turkish monitors in or near the mouths of the Danube, and then assume the offensive with the iron-clads they have at Nicolae and some torpedo vessels now constructing at St. Petersburg.

## A DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD.

A despatch to the Times from its Pera correspondent says:—"A private letter to me confirms the report that Sir Arnold Kemble and Captain Norman, English attachés, who were watching the operations at Zeydekan on June 16, when the Russians defeated the Turks, were pursued by Cossacks for twenty-five miles under the supposition that they were connected with the enemy." The correspondent also says:—"One of the Russian prisoners here, said to be the non-commissioned officer Pouchkine, was killed by jumping out of a window in an attempt to escape."

## NOW FOR SWEET REVENGE'S SAKE.

The Bulgarians in the Dobrudsha are arming against the Turks.

## AUSTRIA'S POSITION.

In the lower house of the Austrian Reichsrath the Minister President, in reply to an interpellation, said no offensive or defensive alliance with Germany had been refused because none had been asked by Germany. He added that the government still maintained its declaration of neutrality. Its relations with foreign Powers were the same and there was no occasion for the mobilization of defensive forces.

## SHE WILL NOT BE LESS WATCHFUL.

Should events occur, however, rendering the reinforcement of troops on the frontier necessary, the government reserved to itself power to take such measures as the protection of the immediate interests on the frontier might require. The fact that the government had hitherto deemed these measures unnecessary, and from a regard for its financial position still dispensed with them, was a guarantee that it would not adopt them prematurely nor to a greater or less extent than might be necessary.

## THE LAWS OF WAR.

The Times in its leading article says:—"Neutral States are painfully interested by the reports that the Russians have been violating the laws of war by the infliction of wanton injury. If they deliberately directed their guns against the consulates and defenceless parts of Rustchuk their guilt is surpassed only by their folly, and that folly would be all the more glaring, because, if, as reported, they continued to fire on the English Consulate after the Consul hoisted the American flag, they would have gone out of their way to assail a power peculiarly friendly to themselves. It is difficult to believe the Russians would have deliberately inflicted such an outrage and it is well to remember that similar charges invariably accompany every bombardment."

## PROBATION OF THE TURKISH CHAMBERS.

In the Turkish Chamber of Deputies yesterday the President announced that he had received orders from the Sultan to declare the session of the Chambers closed. The Deputies would, however, continue to hold their position as representatives, and it was possible they might be assembled for extraordinary session to deliberate upon a "national subject." It is thought this expression was meant to allude to a possible conclusion of peace.